

MARVEL

LEGACY

LETHAL PROTECTOR

158



**COSTA
BAGLEY
DELL
HENNESSY
ALMARA**

VENOM[®]



YEARS AGO, PETER PARKER (A.K.A. THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN) ACCIDENTALLY BONDED WITH AN ALIEN BEING CALLED A SYMBIOTE. WHEN PETER REALIZED THE COSTUME WAS ACTUALLY AN AGGRESSIVE LIVING ORGANISM, HE REJECTED IT. BUT DURING THEIR TIME TOGETHER, THE SYMBIOTE HAD ACCESS TO SPIDER-MAN'S GENETIC CODE AND NOW GRANTS WHOMEVER IT BONDS WITH SKILLS SIMILAR TO HIS: WALL-CRAWLING, THE POWER TO GENERATE BIOORGANIC WEBBING AND UNIQUE ABILITIES TO SHAPE-SHIFT AND BECOME INVISIBLE, TURNING THEM INTO...

VENOM



IN EXCHANGE FOR A SERUM THAT KEEPS HIS SYMBIOTE UNDER CONTROL, VENOM HAS BEEN MONITORING A SUBTERRANEAN COMMUNITY OF DINOSAUR-PEOPLE ON BEHALF OF ALCHEMAX.

BUT A NEW PREDATOR HAS BEEN SKULKING THROUGH THE SEWERS... KRAVEN THE HUNTER!

DEPUTIZED BY MAYOR WILSON FISK TO HUNT THE DINOSAUR-PEOPLE TO EXTINCTION, KRAVEN HAS ENLISTED THE AID OF SHRIEK - ONE OF VENOM'S OLDEST FOES. THE PAIR AMBUSHED HIM IN THE SEWERS, AND THE ENSUING CONFLICT RESULTED IN A CAVE-IN BENEATH THE CITY STREETS!

NOW, THE DINOSAUR-PEOPLE ARE DEFENSELESS, A CITY BLOCK IS RESTING ON EDDIE'S SHOULDERS AND HE'S DUE FOR ANOTHER DOSE OF HIS MEDICATION...

**MIKE
COSTA**
WRITER

**MARK
BAGLEY**
PENCILER

**JOHN DELL &
ANDREW HENNESSY**
INKERS

**DONO
SÁNCHEZ-ALMARA**
COLORIST

VC'S CLAYTON COWLES
LETTERER

**MARK BAGLEY,
JOHN DELL & JOHN RAUCH**
COVER ARTISTS

**ALLISON STOCK
& TOM GRONEMAN**
ASST. EDITORS

DEVIN LEWIS
EDITOR

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MEAT!

FOOD!



TONIGHT
WE EAT! WE
EAT!

HENDO,
STOP!



THIS
IS NOT
RIGHT.

EVERYONE
LEAVING SHELTER,
CHASING THESE
THINGS. WHERE DID
THEY COME
FROM?



DON'T
BE FOOLISH,
TANA.

THEY'RE
A GIFT FROM
ABOVE!





THE STUPID, LUMBERING
HERD TRUNDLES RIGHT
INTO MY TRAP.



I'LL BE HEAD
TO HEELS IN **BLOOD**
TONIGHT.



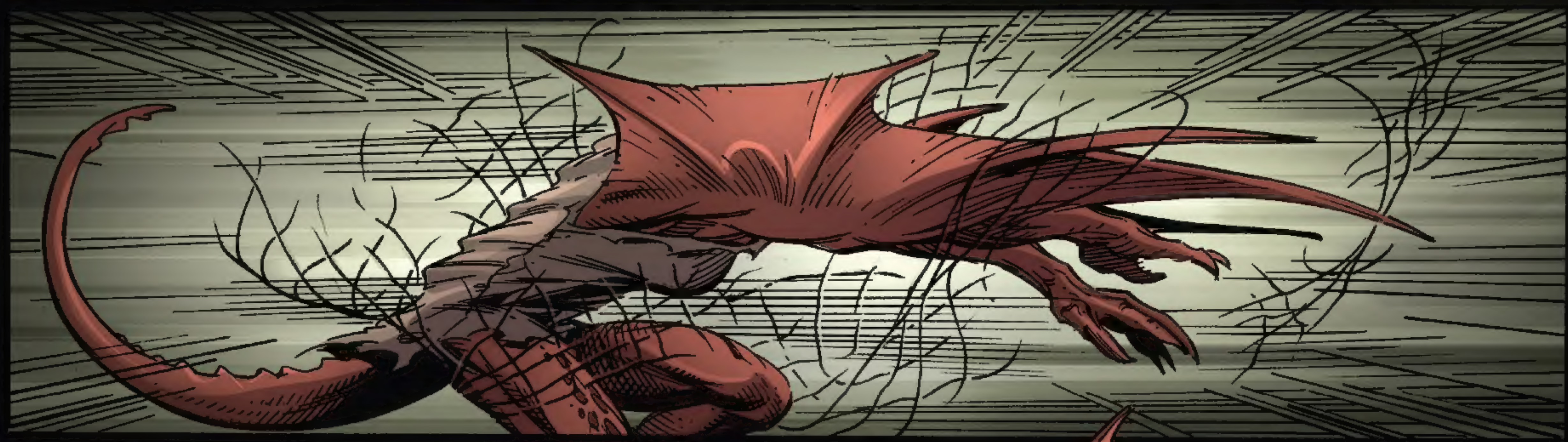
NO!




THAT'S **ENOUGH**,
KRAVINOFF. YOU WERE
INSTRUCTED TO **CAPTURE**
THESE CREATURES, NOT
EXECUTE THEM.


FEH. YOU LEAVE
THE **HUNTING** TO ME
AND CONCERN YOURSELF
WITH ESTABLISHING A
PERIMETER.

SHOOT
ANYTHING THAT
TRIES TO COME
BACK THIS
WAY.






I REMEMBER, IN
THE EARLY DAYS,
I'D DREAM I WAS
DROWNING.




I'D WAKE UP GASPING,
FEELING MY OTHER,
THICK INSIDE MY LUNGS,
FORGETTING I DIDN'T
NEED TO **BREATHE**
ANYMORE.



BUT...WORSE--AWAKE,
IT WOULD FEEL LIKE
MY **MIND** WAS
DROWNING.

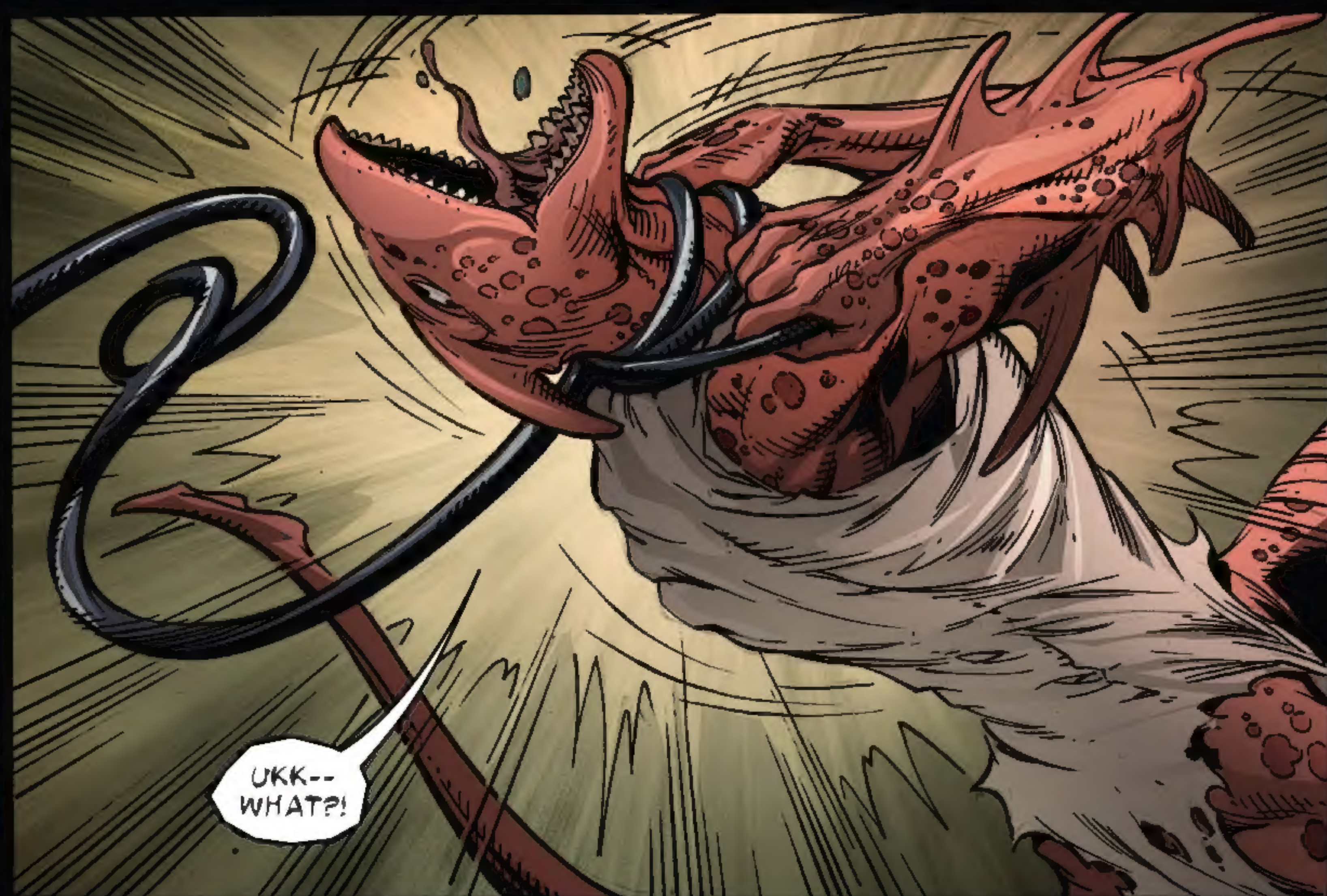
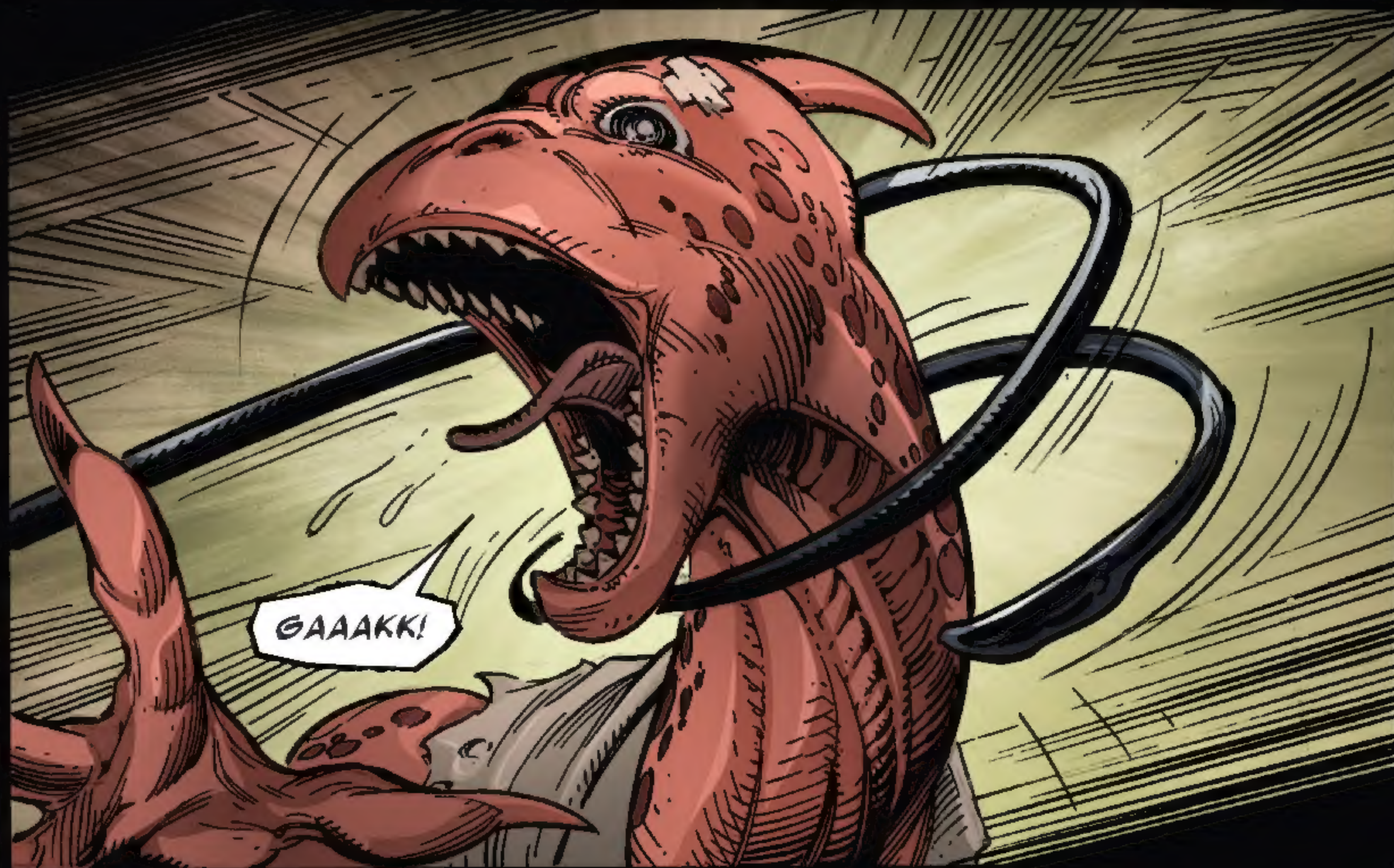
DROWNING IN AN
OCEAN OF **RAGE**
AND **HUNGER.**



THAT WAS **BEFORE.**
BEFORE MY OTHER
GOT **WELL.**

BUT WE'RE NOT
WELL NOW. AND
I CAN FEEL THAT
OCEAN LAPPING
AT ME **AGAIN.**







TANA?
THE ONE THEY
CALL TANA.

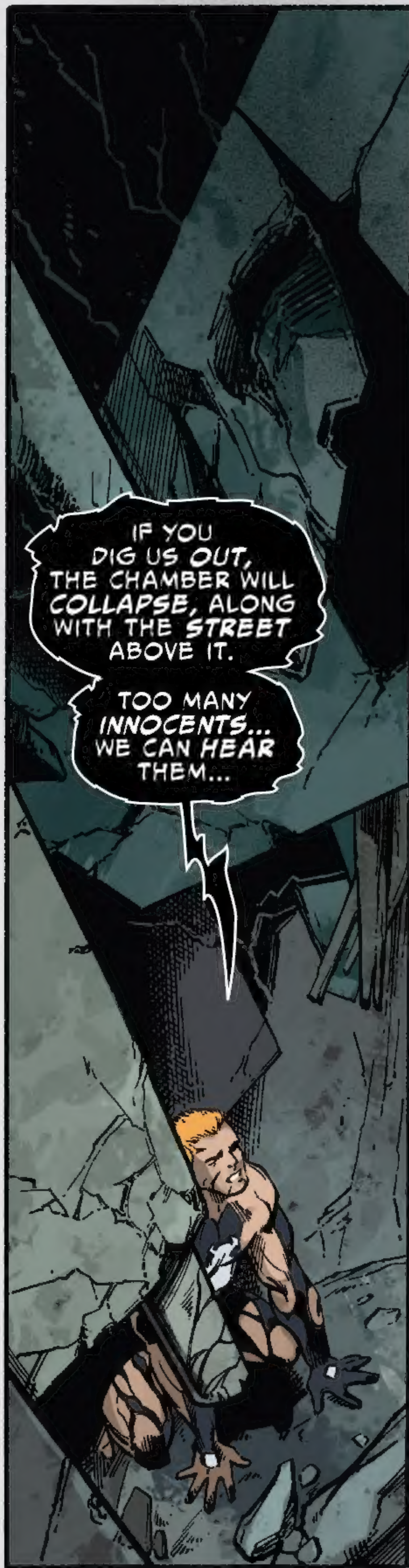
TANA IS A...
FRIEND.

RELEASE...
RELEASE.



SAVIOR. IF
YOU'RE BURIED
IN THERE, I CAN DIG
YOU OUT. MY TALONS
ARE STRONG AND
GOOD FOR--

NO!



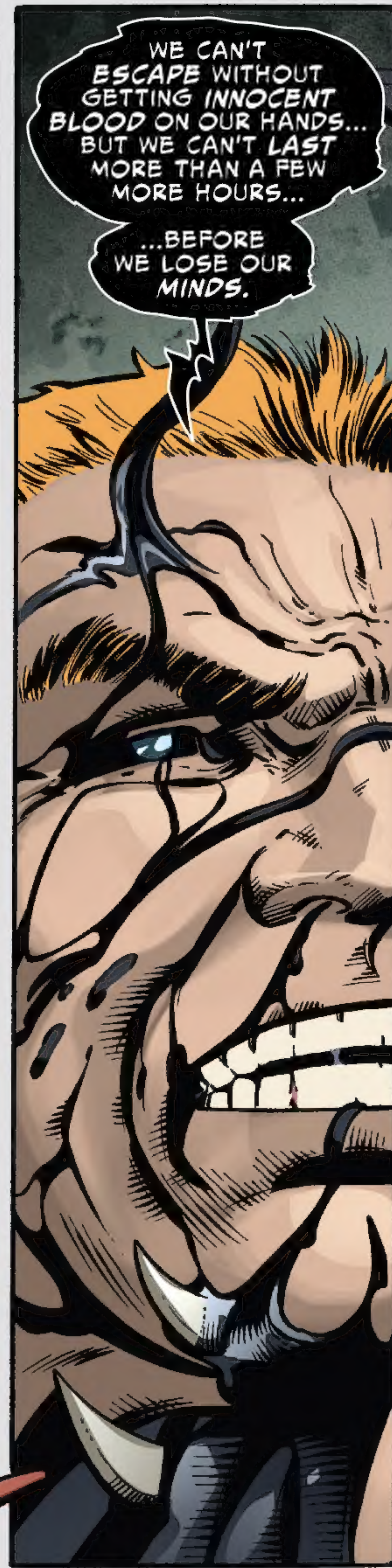
IF YOU
DIG US OUT,
THE CHAMBER WILL
COLLAPSE, ALONG
WITH THE STREET
ABOVE IT.

TOO MANY
INNOCENTS...
WE CAN HEAR
THEM...



BUT YOU
MUST COME!
THAT MONSTER
IS BACK!

HE IS
BUTCHERING
US!



WE CAN'T
ESCAPE WITHOUT
GETTING INNOCENT
BLOOD ON OUR HANDS...
BUT WE CAN'T LAST
MORE THAN A FEW
MORE HOURS...

...BEFORE
WE LOSE OUR
MINDS.



WE
NEED HELP.
ALLIES.

THAT NOSE
OF YOURS BETTER
BE GOOD FOR MORE
THAN JUST SNIFFING
ME OUT.

LATER, TANA WOULD TELL ME THAT SHE FOUND THE MOLOIDS ONLY A FEW CHAMBERS AWAY.

THAT THEY'D BEEN **WATCHING**. THE COLLAPSE OF THE STREET, THE HERDING AND BUTCHERING OF HER PEOPLE, THEY'D BEEN WATCHING IT ALL, **HIDDEN AWAY**.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE SAID EXACTLY, ONLY THAT SHE SAT ON A **HIGH ROCK** AND SPOKE FOR HER PEOPLE WITH SUCH **PASSION**. **VANDOOM'S MONSTER** HIMSELF WEPT.

THAT SHE SPOKE OF THE **SAVIOR SUFFERING** UNDER THE ROCKS, AND OUR GREAT **SACRIFICE**. AND THEY CAME FOR **US...** BUT ALSO FOR **HER**, AND THE GREAT **HEART** SHE SHOWED.



COMPLETE AND TOTAL
#&%^&#@.

BUT IT'S THE KIND OF #&%^&# THAT MAKES A GOOD **STORY**, AND IT'S THOSE KINDS OF STORIES THAT DINOSAUR-PEOPLE MAKE **LEGENDS** OUT OF.



HYNGH!

THE IMPORTANT
THING IS, THEY
FREED US.

THOUGH BY THAT POINT
WE WERE HARDLY IN
CONTROL OF OURSELVES.

KRAVEN.

WHHHERRRRRE
ISSSS HEEEEE?

I'LL
TAKE YOU TO--
GAH!

NO!

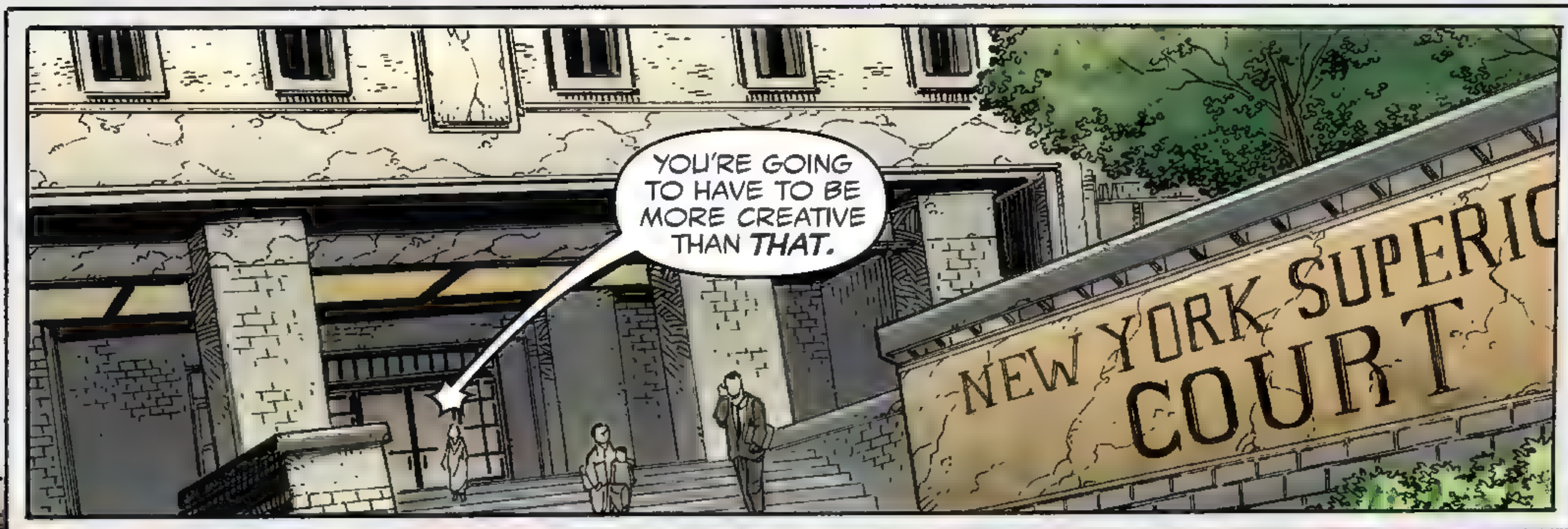
YOU TELL
USSSSSS.

YOU...
CANT COME
WITH US.

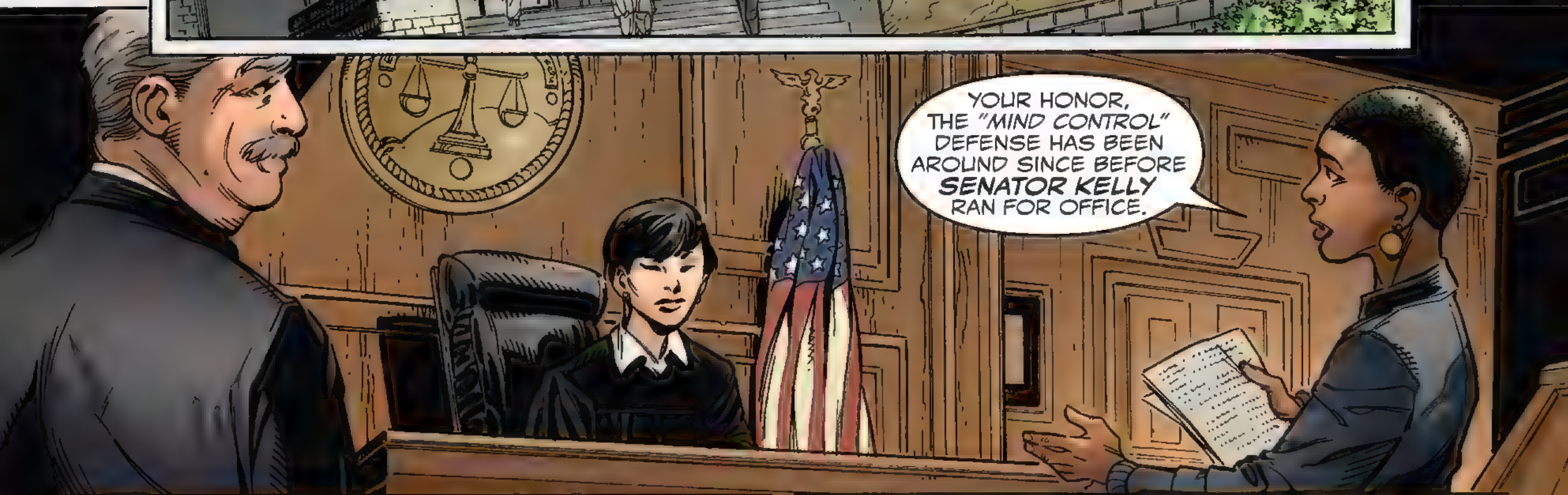
TOO
DANGEROUS...
AND I NEED YOU TO
DO SOMETHING
ELSE FOR
US...

DO YOU
REMEMBER WHERE
WE LIVE?





YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE MORE CREATIVE THAN THAT.

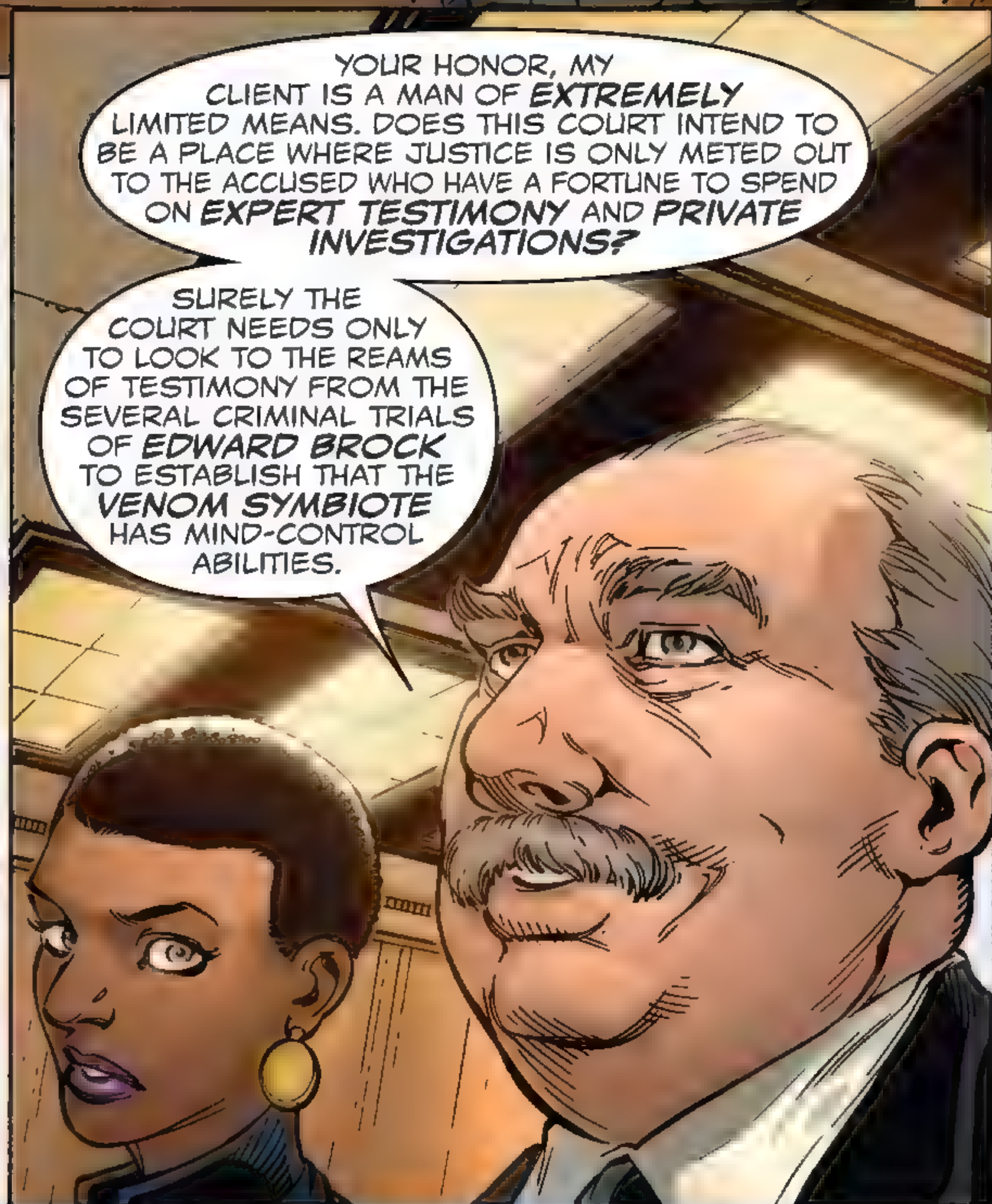


YOUR HONOR, THE "MIND CONTROL" DEFENSE HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE BEFORE SENATOR KELLY RAN FOR OFFICE.



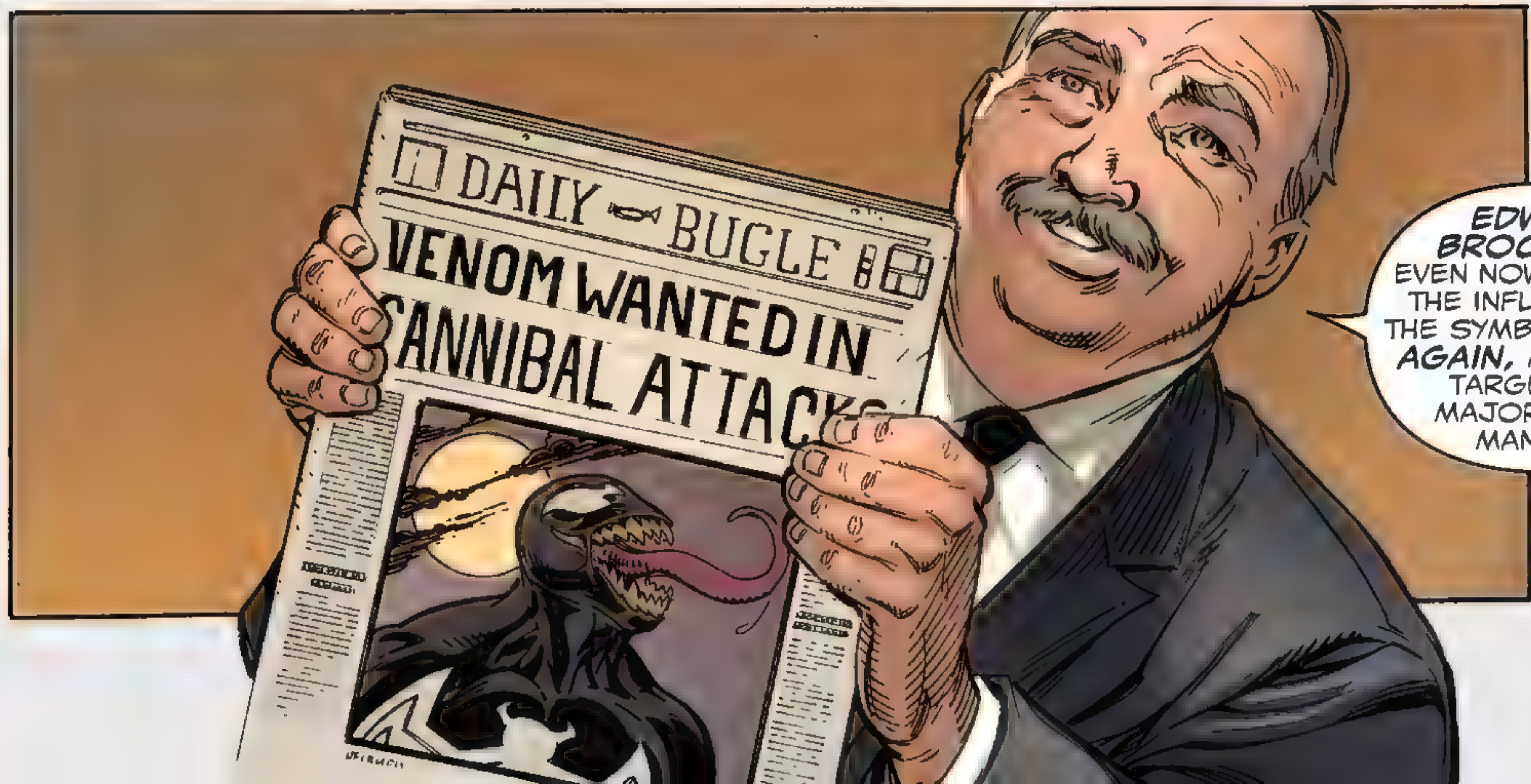
MANY PRIOR CASES, INCLUDING SANDHURST V. STARK ENTERPRISES, SET CLEAR PRECEDENT FOR BURDEN OF PROOF...

MR. PRICE'S LAWYER HASN'T ACQUIRED THE TESTIMONY OF A SINGLE EXPERT IN THE FIELD OF PSIONICS OR ASTROBIOLOGY!



YOUR HONOR, MY CLIENT IS A MAN OF EXTREMELY LIMITED MEANS. DOES THIS COURT INTEND TO BE A PLACE WHERE JUSTICE IS ONLY METED OUT TO THE ACCUSED WHO HAVE A FORTUNE TO SPEND ON EXPERT TESTIMONY AND PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS?

SURELY THE COURT NEEDS ONLY TO LOOK TO THE REAMS OF TESTIMONY FROM THE SEVERAL CRIMINAL TRIALS OF EDWARD BROCK TO ESTABLISH THAT THE VENOM SYMBIOTE HAS MIND-CONTROL ABILITIES.



EDWARD BROCK, WHO EVEN NOW IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE SYMBIOTE ONCE AGAIN, AND IS THE TARGET OF A MAJOR POLICE MANHUNT.

YOUR HONOR, WE ARE NOT HERE TO LITIGATE THE CASE OF **EDWARD BROCK**. WHATEVER CRIMES MR. BROCK MIGHT BE SUSPECTED OF CANNOT NECESSARILY BE LAIN AT THE FEET OF THIS "SYMBIOTE."

BROCK IS A **SERIAL OFFENDER** WHO HAS PLEADED GUILTY IN CRIMINAL COURT!

EXACTLY, YOUR HONOR. WHEREAS LEE PRICE IS AN HONORABLY DISCHARGED **VETERAN** WITH NO HISTORY OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

EVEN HIS **ARREST** WAS MADE UNDER CONFUSING CIRCUMSTANCES, IN A SNAFU INVOLVING **ORGANIZED CRIME**, **ROGUE FEDERAL AGENTS** AND **SPIDER-MAN**, NONE OF WHOM GAVE A COHERENT STATEMENT AT THE SCENE. THIS IS A **CLEAR** CASE OF DISCRIMINATION. HE WASN'T EVEN WITNESSED COMMITTING A CRIME!

HE **STOLE** A **HEAVILY ARMED HELICOPTER**!

DEPLOYED TO KILL HIM UNDER THE ORDERS OF AN FBI AGENT IN THE POCKET OF THE MOB--

PLEASE, COUNSELORS.

IF THE DEFENSE HAS ANYTHING OF ANY **EVIDENTIARY** MERIT...

THE EVIDENCE IS **BEFORE** YOU, YOUR HONOR. LEE PRICE IS ACCUSED OF BEING THE **SUPER-CRIMINAL VENOM**, YET HE SITS BEHIND BARS WHILE **VENOM** IS STILL ACTIVE AND MAKING HEADLINES.

WE HAVE A **NEW MAYOR** WHO OBVIOUSLY WANTS THIS CREATURE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

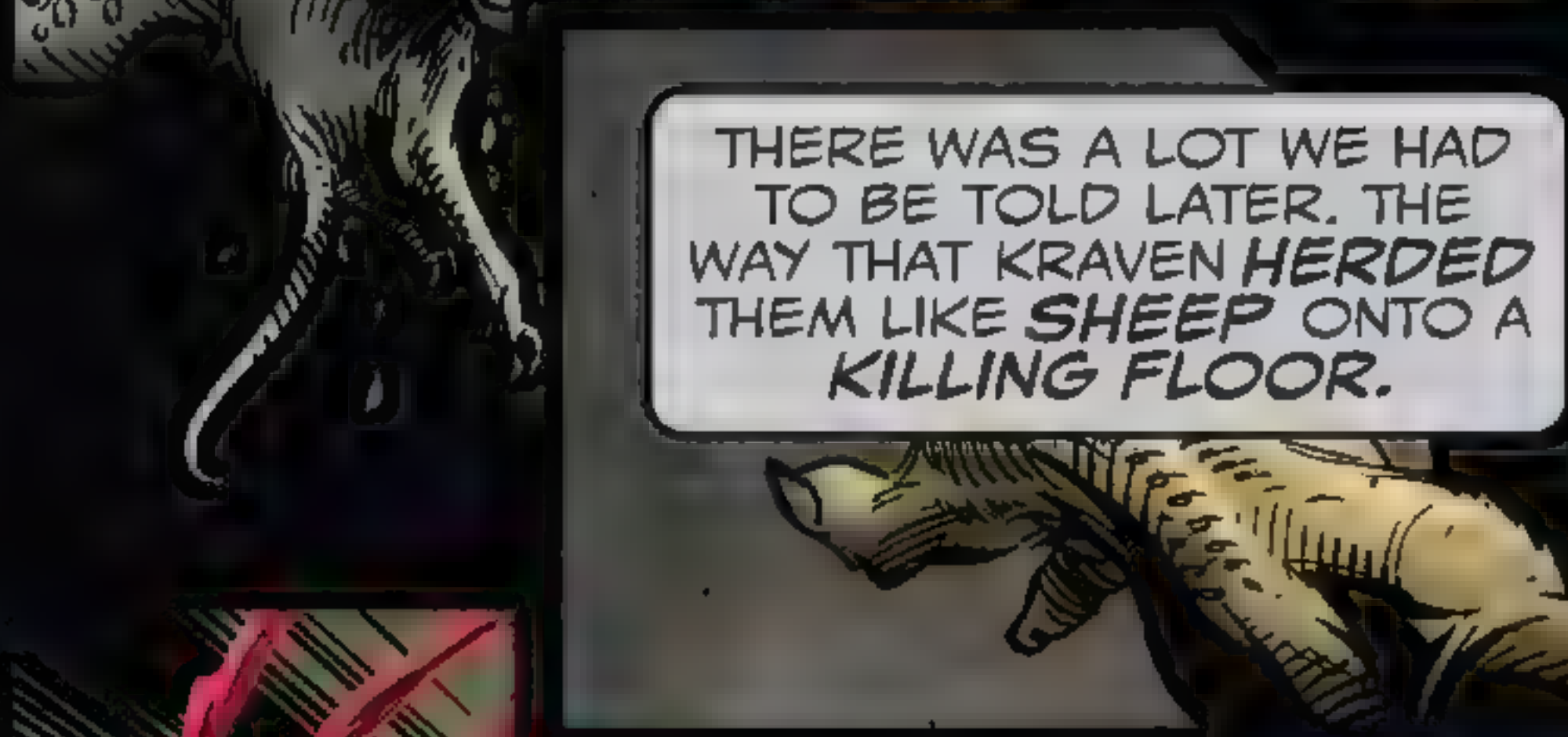
THE COURTS MUST ALWAYS REMAIN IMPARTIAL, OF COURSE. BUT ONE MUST WONDER HOW IT WILL BE TAKEN BY THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY--

--BY THIS **NEW ADMINISTRATION**--

--TO CONFUSE THE CULPABILITY OF THEIR CITY'S **GREATEST THREAT** WITH A MAN WITH **NO CRIMINAL RECORD**...



PICKING THEM OFF
ONE BY ONE.
SMILING.



THERE WAS A LOT WE HAD
TO BE TOLD LATER. THE
WAY THAT KRAVEN HERDED
THEM LIKE SHEEP ONTO A
KILLING FLOOR.



OF COURSE,
WE SAW ALL
OF THAT.



BUT OUR MIND WAS A
RED RUIN BY THEN.



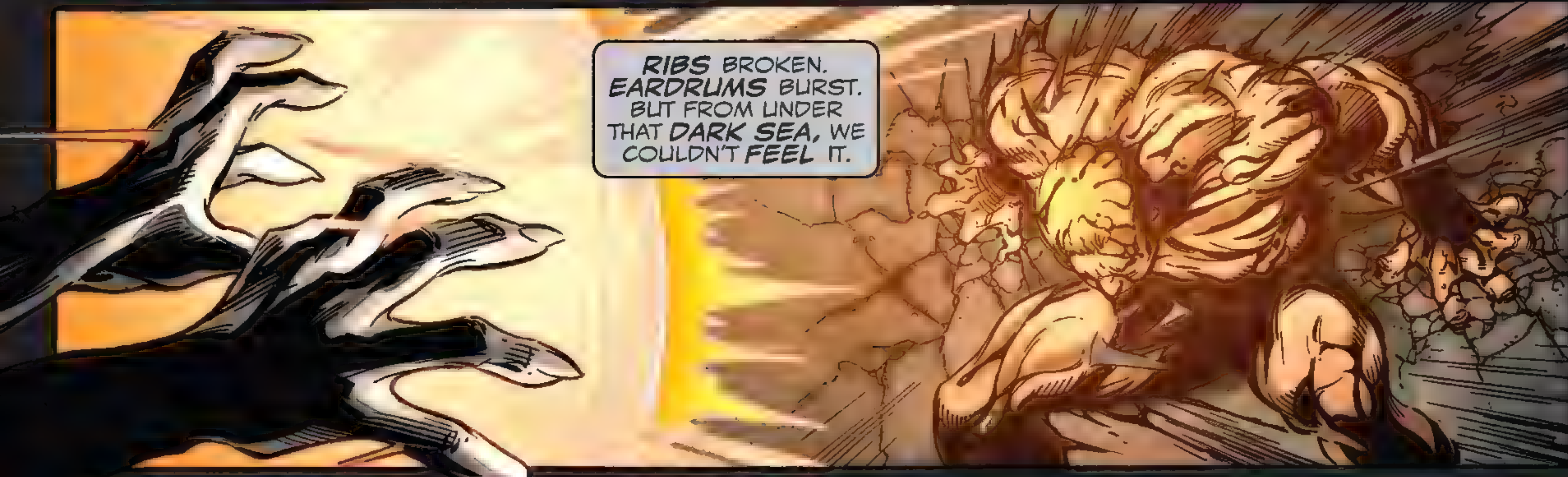
SKREECH



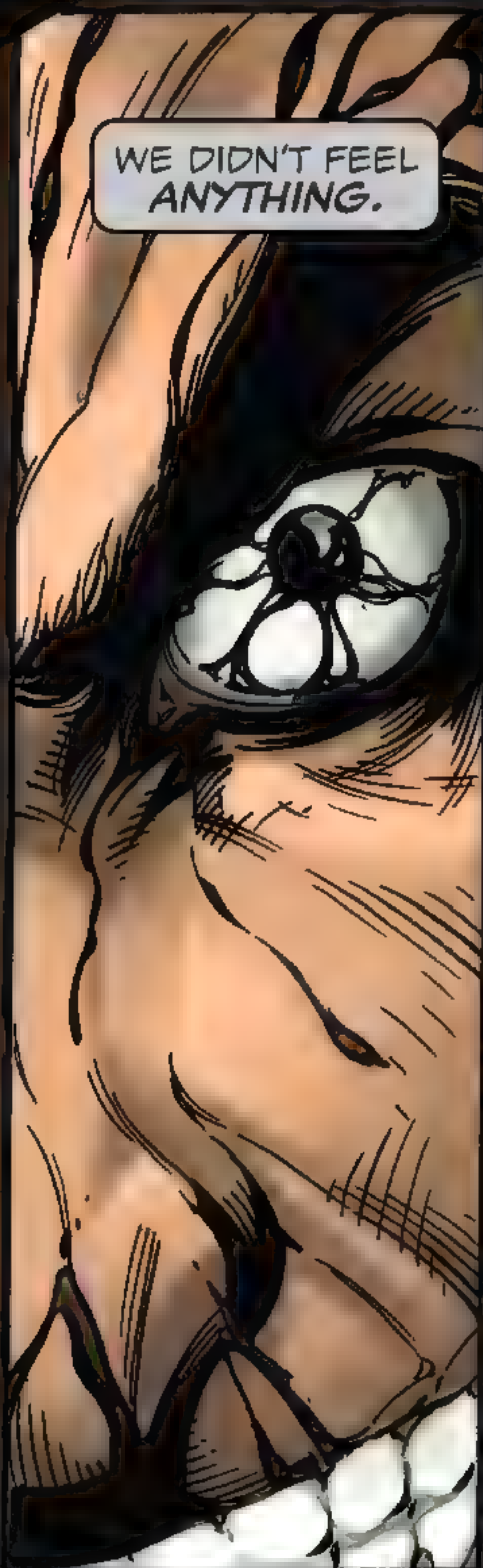
SHRIEK, SEE
IF YOU CAN KILL HIM THIS
TIME *WITHOUT* BRINGING THE
ENTIRE CHAMBER DOWN
ON TOP OF US.



WE WERE
LUCKY,
THOUGH.



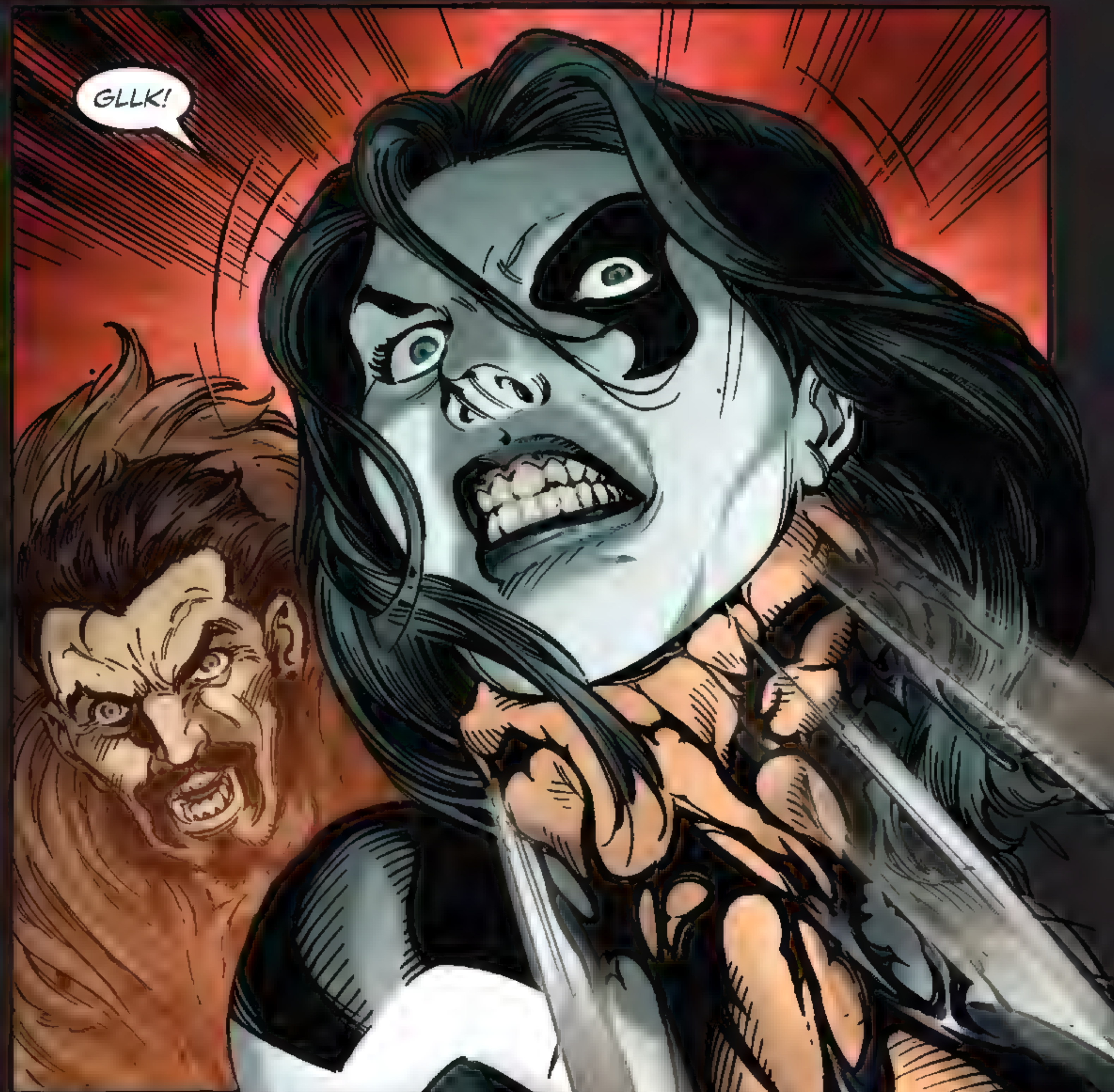
RIBS BROKEN.
EARDRUMS BURST.
BUT FROM UNDER
THAT DARK SEA, WE
COULDN'T FEEL IT.



WE DIDN'T FEEL
ANYTHING.

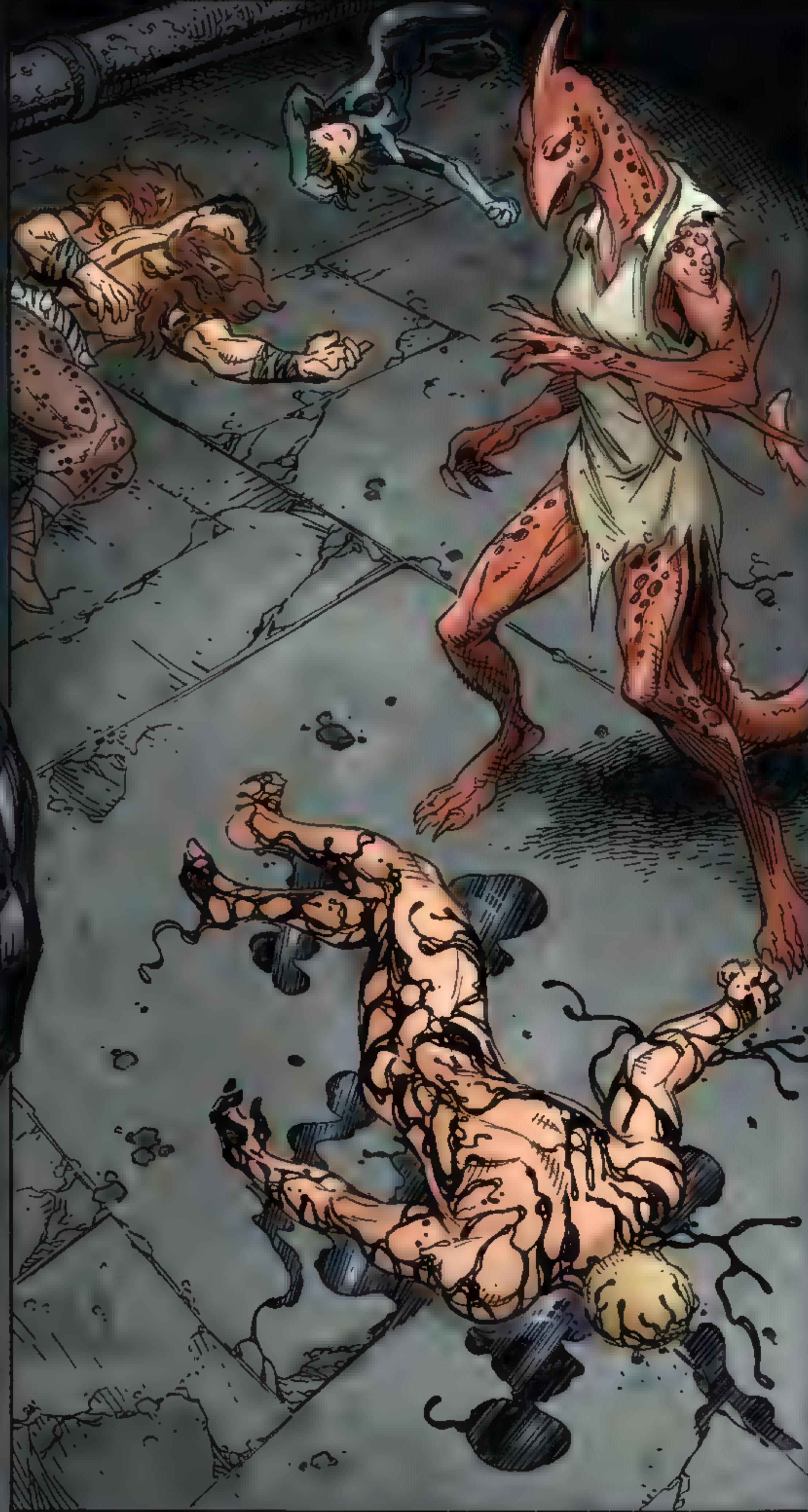


EXCEPT
RAGE.



GLLK!



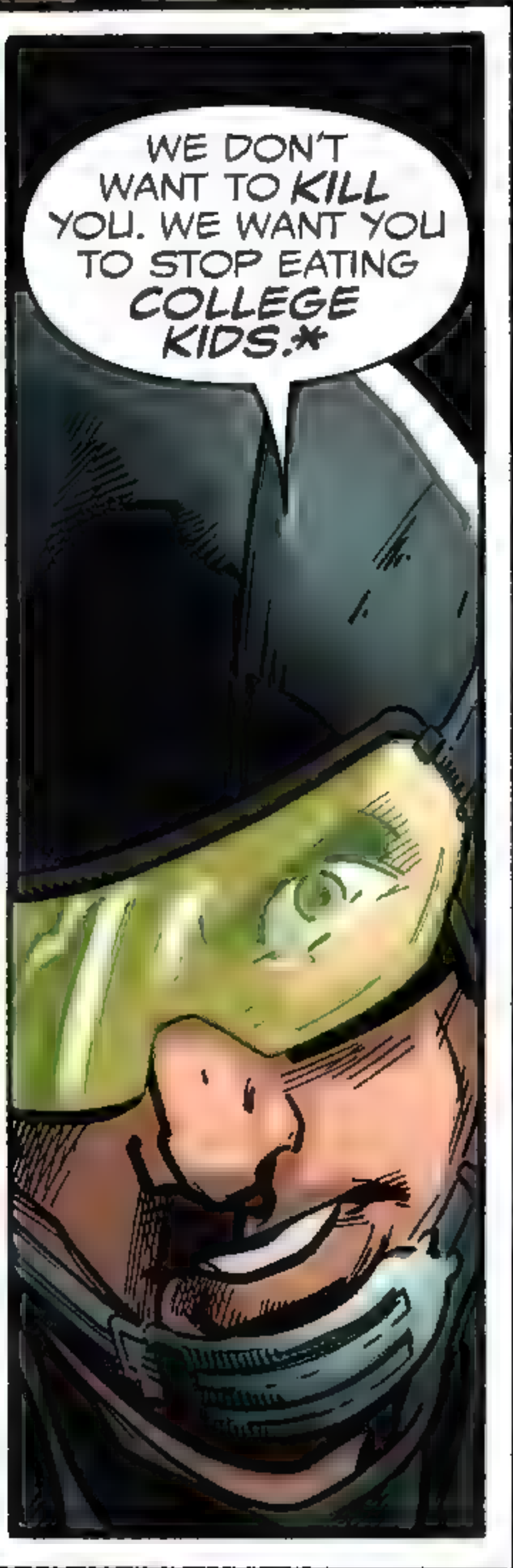




FREEZE!



WHY?
WHY DO YOU
WANT TO KILL
US?



*WAY BACK IN THE
PREHISTORIC DAYS OF
THE LAND BEFORE
CRIME, PART 1, TRUE
BELIEVERS! --DEVIN



WE HAVE
NEVER HURT ANY
PERSON. NEVER
EVEN BEEN TO THE
SURFACE SINCE
OUR CHANGE.



THIS IS THE
MONSTER. A MAN WHO
HURTS AND KILLS FOR
SPORT.

SHOOT
HIM. TAKE HIM
AWAY.



AND
IF YOU ARE ON
HIS SIDE...TAKE
HIM ANYWAY.

THERE IS
ONLY ONE OF
HIM...

...AND
MANY OF
US.



HEY...
I RECOGNIZE
THAT **BLACK-AND-
WHITE** CHICK. SHE'S
A **FUGITIVE!**

YEAH.
WHAT THE
HELL.



I NEVER
LIKED THIS GUY,
ANYWAY.



THAT GUY,
TOO. **EVERYONE'S**
LOOKING FOR THAT
GUY.



NO.

HE IS A
HERO.

AND UNDER OUR
PROTECTION.



WHATEVER.
THE PAPERWORK
I'LL HAVE TO FILL OUT
TO DEAL WITH **THESE**
TWO IS ENOUGH OF
A HASSLE FOR
TODAY.

I DIDN'T
SIGN UP FOR
THIS GIG TO FIGHT
DINOSAURS.





THANK YOU,
TANA.

FOR
EVERYTHING.

BUT THIS
ISN'T OVER.
PEOPLE KNOW
YOU'RE DOWN
HERE. THE POLICE
WILL COME BACK.
WE CAN'T KEEP
THEM AWAY
FOREVER.



THE
MOLOIDS HAVE
LIVED DOWN HERE
UNDISTURBED
FOR YEARS.

WHO IS
TO SAY THAT
MY PEOPLE
WON'T AS
WELL?



AND IF IT
COMES TO IT, YOU
WILL PROTECT US,
AS YOU ALWAYS
HAVE.

AND IF
YOU EVER NEED
SHELTER OF YOUR
OWN...YOU ARE ALWAYS
WELCOME
WITH US.



WE
THANK
YOU...

...BUT
THAT WON'T BE
NECESSARY.



"WITH US BEING BACK IN THE NEWS AGAIN, WE NEED TO LIE LOW FOR A WHILE."

"KEEP QUIET."



"THE ATTENTION WILL BLOW OVER, LIKE IT ALWAYS DOES."



"EVENTUALLY THERE'LL BE NO ONE LOOKING FOR US AGAIN."

EXIT

GOOD LUCK, PRICE.

STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.

DON'T SWEAT IT.



I'M NOT THE ONE WHO HAS TO WORRY ABOUT TROUBLE.

"WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR..."

TO BE CONTINUED
IN VENOM INC.!



Eddie's Clubhouse

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SEND E-MAILS TO SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM (PLEASE MARK "OKAY TO PRINT"!)

And that's that! After four pulse-pounding issues, **LETHAL PROTECTOR: BLOOD IN THE WATER** comes to a close! We hope you readers enjoyed this romp as much as we did – and how about those Mark Bagley illustrations?! What a treat to reunite Mark and the wicked webslinger! And since this is his final issue on this arc, Mark wanted us to share a brief thank you to readers out there who stuck with us for the whole story--

Well...THAT was fun! Sewers, Moloids, dino-guts, and oh yeah, Kraven! When I was asked to draw a new Venom Lethal Protector series who knew that it would be such old school comic book fun...in a good way! It's always a challenge to return to drawing a character after a long absence. You hope it's evident that over the years your artwork has evolved and improved. I hope it has.

What I do know is that with John inking and Dono coloring, my pencils were going to look as good as possible. Working with Mike has been a treat...you should hear the story of when he first met me.

I hope you, the reader has enjoyed this as much as I have enjoyed working on it.

If so, maybe we can do another Lethal Protector in another 20 years!

-Mark Bagley

And that's not all! Inker John Dell and Colorist Dono Sanchez Almara wanted to say a few thank you's to you readers, as well!

Right around the time the arc Mark and I did on **BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER** was wrapping up, Mark hinted about a Venom storyline and asked if I would be interested in inking it. I just said enthusiastically--yes!

First, Mark's pencils are a blast, and the man is a machine, almost effortlessly delivering top-notch storytelling and nicely detailed pages still leaving me room to play around.

Also seeing where Mike was going with the story...to paraphrase Mark from a short phone call--"we have dinosaur-people fighting Molemen in the sewers with Venom fighting Kraven in the mix"...I was definitely all in! The series was/is a wild ride from the beginning.

Special thanks to Devin, Allison, Nick and Axel for letting me play with these cool toys, and thanks Mark for letting me splash ink on your pages!

Enjoy the read!

John Dell

In all my career, before **SPACE KNIGHT**,

I had never had the opportunity to color **VENOM** nor join forces with Mark before, so this was an absolute thrill for me!

Hope you enjoyed the ride and had as much fun reading as I had coloring. Thanks for reading!

Dono Sánchez-Almara

And thanks to YOU, Mark, John and Dono! With any luck, we'll get ya back here in the future for another **VENOM** adventure!

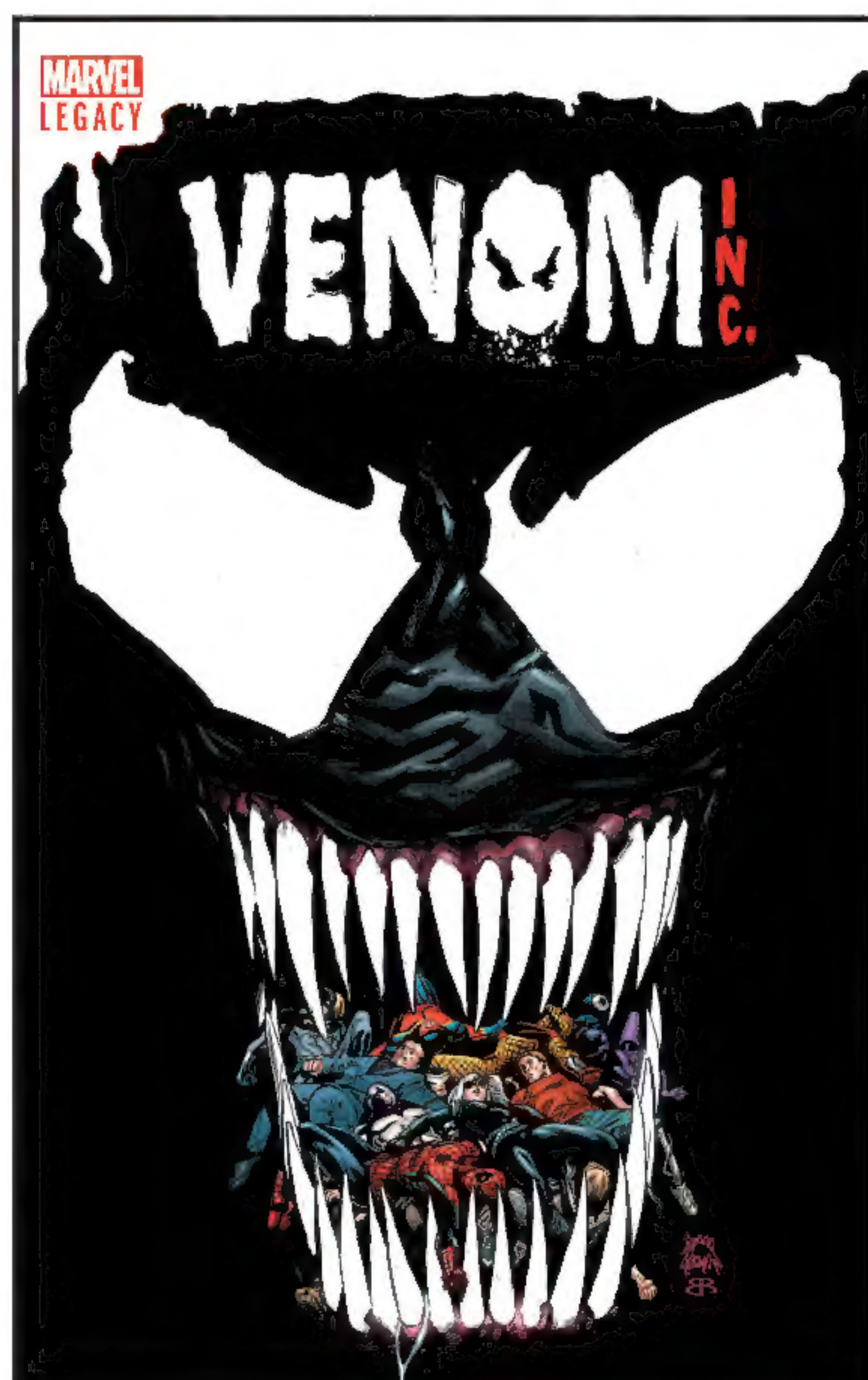
BUT FIRST there's the little matter of Lee Price to deal with! Lee is such a calm and level-headed guy, I'm sure he'll go on his merry way after Spidey and Venom had him locked up, right?

NOT LIKELY, TRUE BELIEVERS!

Lee's going to make a brutal return to the pages of **VENOM**, but, this time, Spider-Man will be right there on the frontlines, too, in **VENOM INC.**--the first-ever **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN/VENOM** crossover!

Co-written by Spider and Symbiote scribes Dan Slott and Mike Costa, with illustrations from Ryan Stegman and Gerardo Sandoval, **VENOM INC.** is a six-part story unlike any Marvel's ever published before!

AND IT STARTS NEXT WEEK!



Enough plugging! The mailbox is pilin' up, so let's get to your letters!

Hi, Venom guys!

Isaiah here, 13 year old Marvel and Venom fanatic since I was 8. Hawaii born

and raised! **VENOM** has been amazing ever since the very first issue! It's one of the only series that keeps me intrigued and not being able to wait for the next issue. And Eddie Brock is back! Thanks so much!

I also took this opportunity to send this note so I could give you a storyline for the future because I've always wanted to be a part of the Marvel team!

So--after your "Lethal Protector" story, which, I presume, will make Venom sort of a hero again and trusted by his peers, maybe one of his old enemies, or even one of his used-to-be-villain friends, could secretly infect Venom with a nanobot virus that would make him just lose control and start killing people like the old days. The serum from Alchemax that he's taking can't stop a nanotech virus, so Eddie would need to seek help from his friends. That's all I got for ya! Again, love the Venom Legacy story you chose!

Can't wait for Legacy in general!
See ya later, Marvelites!

Isaiah M

Thanks for your letter, Isaiah! It's great to hear that you like where we're taking **VENOM**, and trust me when I tell you that you'll like what we have planned even **MORE!** It might not involve nanobots (although that's a heck of an idea for a story, and I can't wait to read it when you're runnin' the show up here!), but it will feature all-new, all-awesome characters, the return of Lee Price as a brand new and dangerous Venom foe, and maybe even a little romance?! You'll just have to keep reading to find out what we have in store...

If you really do want to work here in the Hallowed Halls of the House of Ideas one day, be sure to check YouTube for the **HOW TO BREAK INTO COMICS THE MARVEL WAY** panel from past comic cons. C.B. Cebulski has hosted them in years past, and they're a fantastic resource for learning how to make it in the biz as a writer or artist.

And if it's Marvel editorial you're looking to break into, be sure to look up Marvel Publishing editorial internships when you get to college in a few years! They're a great way to learn how to make comics firsthand!

That's all the space we've got for this one, Venomaniacs! Be back here in one week for **VENOM INC. ALPHA** and two weeks after that for Part 3 of that story in **VENOM 159!**

Stay Sharp!
Devin
@edevinlewis

